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New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The current session of the General Assembly is taking place in the context of a growing understanding of the need to further strengthen the United Nations as the central mechanism for the collective resolution of problems in international relations with a view to ensuring global security and stability. There can be no doubt that that objective can be achieved only if adequate resources are provided to this global Organization and if its structure and mechanisms are enhanced.

In this context, it is high time to reform the United Nations, including adapting the composition of the Security Council to the dramatically changed international realities.

The reform of the Security Council should be aimed at making that authoritative organ more representative and more effective in its decision-making. Such reform is now urgent, as the recent general debate and the current discussion have clearly demonstrated.

At the same time, we cannot close our eyes to the distinct differences in the approaches taken by Member States to the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. We are convinced that the achievement of the broadest possible consensus should remain the key benchmark in the reform process. We have an enormous responsibility to prevent division in the Organization. Our task is to lay the groundwork for the greater authority and potential of the Security Council as the main organ for maintaining international peace and security.

Russia is prepared to continue the painstaking work to bring us closer to the selection of an optimal model for the future composition of the Security Council. We are ready to examine constructive proposals on this issue, on the understanding that an increase in any category of Council membership should involve both developed and developing States, with equal rights and responsibilities being shared between them. We believe that, in the event that additional permanent seats are created, Germany, Japan, India, Brazil and an authoritative representative from Africa would be worthy candidates to claim them.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of ensuring that in its composition the renewed Council remains compact so that it can respond adequately and rapidly to the challenges of the new millennium. We are certain that those delegations that have worked in the Security Council clearly understand that an excessive expansion of the Council could have a

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negative impact on its ability to function, with repercussions for international security.

We are convinced that ideas involving the infringement of the prerogatives and authority of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the veto right, would be counter-productive. Unfounded criticism of that vital institution, which contributes to ensuring a necessary balance of interests among Council members, only stirs up unnecessary emotions and makes it harder to reach the consensus sought with regard to the reform parameters.

As to granting the veto right to new permanent members, we believe that there is no point in discussing that issue before agreement has been reached on the expanded membership of the Security Council.

Having actively supported the Secretary-General's establishment of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the Russian Federation, like all other Member States, is looking forward with genuine interest to receiving its recommendations. We trust that Panel members will live up to their reputation as being truly wise and will develop recommendations to effectively strengthen and improve multilateral mechanisms, including the Security Council. We hope that the Secretary-General's proposals on the outcome of the work of the High-level Panel will take into account the wide range of approaches to the reform of the Security Council.

Finally, Member States will need to implement those proposals, ensuring a comprehensive strengthening of the United Nations. Based on that position, the Russian Federation will continue to constructively contribute to the process, including through contributing to the work of the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly towards finding an effective and widely supported model for the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, almost every delegation included the issue of the reform of the Security Council in its statement. That once again shows the great importance that all parties attach to this issue. It also indicates the responsibility borne by the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on reform of the Security Council. We believe that this group, under the chairmanship of Assembly President Jean Ping, will engage in constructive discussions to reach consensus on a set of recommendations.

Reform of the Security Council is at the core of United Nations reform. Over the past six decades, the membership of the United Nations has increased nearly fourfold, with developing countries representing a large proportion of that increase. As one of the principal organs of the United Nations, the Security Council plays an important role in international affairs and has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It should therefore keep pace with the times and conduct rational and necessary reforms. We all maintain that reform of the Security Council should be targeted at strengthening its status as the core body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, enhancing its capacity in dealing with threats and challenges and, as a matter of priority, finding an effective solution to the under-representation of developing countries, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

Reform of the Security Council should also include the further improvement of its working methods and its transparency. Some progress has been achieved in this regard over recent years. The increasing number of public meetings, the good communication and cooperation with troop-contributing countries and the regular meetings held among the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have been received very positively by the majority of Member States. China would like to work together with other Council members to continue the efforts in that regard.

It has been more than 10 years since the General Assembly started the debate on reform of the Security Council. Given the current situation, we urgently need to accelerate the reform. Meanwhile, we should not lose sight of the fact that reform of the Council involves a multitude of factors and contradictions and that significant differences exist in the proposed specifics of the reform programme.

In-depth discussions and patient consultations are therefore called for, in order to demonstrate political will and the wisdom of compromise and to seek the broadest possible consensus on all relevant aspects. A forceful push towards a vote on a reform package could result in confrontation and division between

Member States. That would be detrimental to the reform of the Security Council, contradict its original purpose and inevitably harm the strengthening of the Council's authority and functioning.

China supports the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and looks forward to comprehensive, positive and practical recommendations that can be widely supported. China will take an active part in the relevant discussions and will work with other parties to move the reform process forward.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly is jointly considering agenda items 11 and 53, on the report of the Security Council and on the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In our delegation's view, while they are listed separately — and rightly so — the two items are closely related. We feel that they have a bearing on the hopes of the international community to see a more representative, democratic and transparent Security Council that can respond effectively and rapidly to the new challenges inherent in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter.

On this occasion, allow me to thank Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry for introducing the annual report of the Council (A/59/2). I would now like to refer to that report. My delegation feels that the way in which the report was presented is limited to compliance with procedural requirements and that the structure of the report does not allow for an analysis or a substantive assessment. Such an assessment would have enabled the members of the Security Council to draw conclusions from this General Assembly debate through which to move forward on formulating a report that is more analytical, instead of a merely descriptive and chronological account of the items under consideration.

We make this comment because we feel that Member States' consideration of the report should not be a mere formality, but rather a reaffirmation of the Assembly's responsibility in matters of fundamental importance for the entire membership of the Organization. We, the Member States, have the right and the duty properly to understand and analyse the work of the Council, because the Council acts on behalf of all of us, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it in our Charter, and because its decisions affect the membership. We therefore need a report that enables us to understand the substance of the Council's discussions and of the positions it adopts on the most relevant matters before it.

We therefore support and encourage the position of previous speakers, who have insisted that the report of the Security Council should include a more interactive component for the General Assembly, since the report is the main instrument in the relationship between these two principal organs of the Organization. The maintenance of international peace and security is the responsibility of us all.

Paraguay feels that an important step in improving the presentation of the Security Council report can be found in paragraph 3 and following section A of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/126, adopted on 19 December 2003, on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

We support and encourage the process of open meetings of the Security Council. Open meetings should be the rule and not the exception, so that Member States can express their point of view on matters affecting Members and the Organization, and — though it may be optimistic to say so — so that Council members may take Members' views into account before resolutions are adopted rather than merely presenting them as faits accomplis.

Another area of concern for Paraguay is the Council's involvement in matters traditionally dealt with in the General Assembly or in the Economic and Social Council, overburdening the Security Council with matters requiring decisions but without sufficient time to deal with them properly. In addition, we are concerned at the expansion of the normative nature of the Council's resolutions, whereby the Council assumes a legislative competency that exceeds the mandate granted to it in the Charter of the United Nations.

On the question of equitable representation in the Security Council and an increase in its membership, the Open-ended Working Group established in 1993 has been meeting year after year without arriving at a consensus that would enable Member States to take a decision. Nevertheless, my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for the decisive

impetus he brought during his chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group to encourage debate and produce a report that included positions of Member States and sought to bridge the gap in the differing stances.

Member States agree on the need to reform the Security Council and to increase its membership, but not on the form and procedure for doing so, despite the fact that it is set forth in the Charter, as well as in Assembly resolution 53/30, which stipulates that the General Assembly will not adopt any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation in the Security Council, an increase in its membership and related matters without a vote in favour by at least two thirds of the Members of the General Assembly. In order to preserve the integrity of our Organization we need to arrive at a consensus on this question, as it concerns one of the fundamental organs that sustains our Organization.

Paraguay eagerly awaits the report to be submitted at the end of the year by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change established by the Secretary-General to consider present and future threats to international peace and security. The recommendations in that report may well contribute to building a consensus on reform of the body entrusted with collective security.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate the well-known position of Paraguay on the question of equitable representation in the Security Council and on an increase in its membership. Paraguay favours an increase in the number of members in the Security Council in order to take into account the political realities of today and the increase in the number of Member States in our Organization. To build a more democratic and representative Security Council, both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — should be increased and should include both developed and developing countries, particularly as developing countries have been underrepresented in that important body. An increase in the Council's membership will make it more representative and will therefore improve the legitimacy and credibility of its actions.

Similarly, as a fundamental aspect of reform, we need to consider the question of the right of veto that is held by permanent members. We must work towards the gradual elimination of the veto until it can be completely done away with. A first step should be to limit it strictly to questions under Chapter VII of the Charter. Similarly, we could leave open the possibility for periodic review of reform in order to assess the functioning of the Security Council in accordance with future needs and realities.

Today we must shoulder our responsibilities and make the political decision to move this process forward and achieve the objective desired by the majority of Member States. In that regard, we trust in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and we hope that in the coming months he will help us to find a way to move forward in this exercise and arrive at the conclusion we have so long hoped for.

In conclusion, I would reiterate that no reform of the United Nations will have the desired effect if the long-awaited reform of the Security Council is not realized. Until then, we will not be able to speak of an Organization that has kept pace with the times nor will that Organization be able to respond to the interests and aspirations of the international community.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): It is my great pleasure to take part on behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam in the debate on the two important agenda items relating to the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Jones Parry, for introducing the Council's report. Our sincere thanks also go to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council — chaired by Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly — for its contributions and its report, which serves as a good basis for our discussion today. We look forward to receiving the report of the High-level Panel on Challenges, Threats and Change and will study its recommendations carefully for further deliberation.

The past year has really been a year of hard work for the Security Council, as reflected in the great number of meetings it has held and the wide range of complex and urgent issues it has had to tackle, from escalated conflicts and violence to terrorism and humanitarian crises. Fifty-nine resolutions were

adopted and 45 presidential statements were made. We wish to express our great appreciation for the efforts of the members of the Council.

Having closely followed the work of the Council, the delegation of Viet Nam acknowledges that there has been an evolution in some of its working methods and practice.

As mentioned in the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/58/47), since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 58/126 — which provides for, inter alia, orientation of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council — progress has been made with regard to the regular briefing of the President of the General Assembly by the President of the Security Council on the work of the Council. The practice of providing non-Council members with necessary information about the preparation of draft resolutions and decisions is also positive and should be encouraged.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The current structure and composition of the Council's membership do not reflect today's realities; indeed, they are limiting its ability to carry out its mandate effectively. In 1963, when the membership of the Council was expanded to 15, the total membership of the United Nations was 112; therefore, the Council's membership represented 13 per cent of the membership of the Organization. Today, the Organization has 191 members, and the Council's membership represents only 7.85 per cent of the membership of the Organization. For that very reason, and because of the manner in which the Council's resolutions and decisions are negotiated, the legitimacy of those resolutions and decisions has constantly been questioned. Reform of the Council is urgent and inevitable, and it must be carried out in a way that will make the Council more representative and more democratic.

Viet Nam shares the view of the majority of Member States that Security Council reform must include expansion of its membership, with due attention to the need to ensure more adequate representation of developing countries and to improve its decision-making process. Viet Nam supports increasing the Council's membership in both categories — permanent and non-permanent — and supports measures aimed at ensuring broader participation and greater democracy, accountability and transparency in its work. With regard to expanding the permanent membership of the Council in the light of its present unbalanced structure, we are of the view that, in addition to capable countries such as India, Japan and Germany — for which Viet Nam has voiced its support — other capable developing countries from various continents should be able to join the Council as permanent members.

Viet Nam attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council, and we have announced our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Council in the near term. There is every reason for us to want the Council to be strengthened and its work to be improved. Such strengthening and improvement will depend on how well and how soon we will be able to reform the Council. We look forward to joining our efforts with those of other Member States in that important process.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): A year ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his statement to this body, announced that the United Nations had reached a fork in the road. He decided to establish a High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to assess the current situation and to make recommendations on the way forward. In his statement to the General Assembly at its 3rd meeting two weeks ago, the Secretary-General highlighted the lack of the rule of law, or of respect for it, to be a root cause of the key problems that the world faces today.

Indeed, those are related issues. Today, the world is confronted with radically new threats, not the least of which are global terrorist networks that respect neither national boundaries nor traditional international law. Clearly, the United Nations needs to fashion new practical rules to deal with those new threats. Yet, at the same time, we must continue to ensure that there are adequate safeguards against traditional threats. Finding the right balance between those equally urgent imperatives will not be easy. But it will not be impossible if we can find the discipline to debate the issues openly and realistically, with a clear appreciation of both the limitations and the potential of the United Nations.

Singapore is looking forward to the report of the High-level Panel. We understand that the Panel has conducted a broad overview of the current international situation and has looked at how the international

community could better address the threats, challenges and change that it faces. Unfortunately, news reports about the Panel's work have focused almost exclusively on the issue of Security Council reform, as if that were the only issue that the High-level Panel had been tasked to deal with. The Panel's discussions have also precipitated a race by a number of countries — no fewer than nine at last count — to put themselves forward as aspiring new permanent members of an expanded Security Council. Four of those aspirants have even met to forge a joint strategy.

Singapore is concerned that such a focus on Security Council reform may result in the general findings and other important recommendations of the High-level Panel not receiving the attention that they merit. Worse still, there is a risk that, if the report of the High-level Panel fails to meet the expectations of the aspiring States, they might reject the report out of hand. We sincerely hope and trust that that will not be the case.

We are also concerned that the vying for new permanent membership foreshadows a fierce fight — something that small States like Singapore do not relish. As the saying goes, "Among these elephants, whether they fight or make love, it is the poor grass that gets trampled". Indeed, if this tussle heats up, smaller States can expect direct pressure — on the one hand, from these aspirants to support them, and on the other, from their detractors not to do so.

Against that backdrop, I would like to examine some of the arguments that have been put forward for expanding the Security Council. Many of those arguments are well known. The key argument has been that the world has changed tremendously since 1945 but that the United Nations Charter and the composition of the Security Council — especially its permanent membership — have remained essentially unchanged. Let us not forget that the Charter, which contains ideals that we must never relinquish, has been continuously interpreted and reinterpreted to meet changing geopolitical circumstances and new challenges, many of which were unforeseen by the founders of the United Nations.

As regards the institutional structure of the Organization — especially that of the Security Council — the configuration in 1945 reflected the reality of the distribution of power in the world at that time. If we were to try to capture the current reality, we would be setting ourselves up for a major disappointment. The fact is that, at present, one country wields power that far exceeds that of all the other permanent members and all the aspirants combined. If we were to try to make the Council reflect that current reality, the only way we could do so would be to have just one permanent member. The fact is that the United Nations can operate only on the basis of a hard-headed appreciation of the realities of power. If we try to deny that fact and force the issue, we stand to do the United Nations a great disservice.

A second frequent argument is that if the Security Council is to be credible, it must be representative. Some have pointed to the trend of the Council's increasing legislative role in order to argue that urgent expansion of the Council is needed, including in its permanent ranks. But what real guarantee can Member States — especially small States like Singapore — have that an expanded Council will become more, not less, open to consultation and that it will take the views of non-Council members more into account? The reason for my concern is that, whereas the current five permanent members represent about 25 per cent of the world's total population, the addition of, say, another five permanent members from among the leading aspirants would bring that percentage up to 50 per cent or more of the world's population. Since together they would represent a majority of the world's population, would that not increase the tendency of the permanent members to feel that they can legitimately make decisions on everyone's behalf?

Moreover, a number of countries have been saying that their citizens have been clamouring for their countries to become permanent members in return for the significant financial contributions of those countries. By the same logic, should Council decisions also be influenced if the citizens of the permanent members press directly for particular approaches, on the grounds that "he who pays the piper calls the tune"? That is a real possibility, given that the combined contributions to the United Nations budget of the current permanent members and five of the leading aspirants would rise from 37.25 per cent to 67.45 per cent. Thus, the legislative role of the Security Council may increase significantly, which would risk going beyond what the general membership can accept.

That said, please do not get me wrong, as I am not against the expansion of the Security Council.

What I am saying is that we need to be clear and to agree on the objectives of such an exercise and how best to go about expanding the Council. Unfortunately, I do not see that as the case after 11 years of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. In Singapore's view, if our aim is to render the Council more credible and more effective, we need a comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects, including its working methods. The credibility of an organization or institution rests not on any nebulous notion of representativeness, but on its performance, which determines the degree to which its decisions are accepted by its stakeholders. Going by the work of the Council over the past year and by its report — which, unfortunately, was made available only very late last week — if Member States are to give an honest assessment of the Council's performance in the discharge of its functions, I am not sure how well the Council would be rated.

What matters to small countries is the Security Council's effectiveness and transparency and the involvement of non-members when issues of direct interest to them are considered. Any organizational management consultant will tell us that there is no better way to induce good performance than a measure of transparency and accountability. Regrettably, even as most governance processes in the world have moved towards greater transparency over the last few decades, the Security Council until very lately moved in the opposite direction. Some of us might be astonished to learn that the first Security Council meetings and discussions — today, often held in closed sessions — were in fact held in the open and on record, with reports of the frank exchanges available for all to read. I have circulated, together with my statement, a copy of the verbatim records of the first Security Council meeting on 17 January 1946, which shows clearly the quality of Council discussions back then. In fact, there was so much transparency at the first meeting of the Security Council that the United Kingdom delegate, without realizing that his microphone was switched on, was heard saying: "That bloody Chairman has double-crossed me again". That, by the way, does not appear in the copy of the records that I have circulated.

Paradoxically, I submit that, if the Council were to become more transparent in its normal work, it would gain confidentiality where confidentiality matters, as everyone will accept that the Council's work necessarily involves a number of sensitive discussions. Conversely, the current practice of holding all its real discussions behind closed doors has not enabled the Council to keep anything secret. On the contrary, the difficulty posed to non-Council members in following the proceedings seems to challenge them to uncover everything that is said behind closed doors, sometimes resulting in delegates' feeding off rumours and misleading information.

Along with a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, in considering how to expand the Council's membership it may also be useful to consider the kind of criteria that would help us to reach common agreement on the optimal new configuration of the Council. Having said that, Singapore is intuitively of the view that if the General Assembly can agree on the expansion of the permanent membership, Japan and Germany are two obvious candidates. I should add, however, that any expansion of permanent membership should include both developed and developing countries and be accompanied by an appropriate increase in non-permanent seats to maintain the current ratio of permanent to non-permanent seats.

Given the time constraint, I shall not delve further into the issue of criteria for now, except to note that practically all the aspirants are big States. But that leads me to wonder whether size is really that essential. Can big States empathize with and understand the problems and concerns of small States, which comprise the majority of Member States?

Finally, as the powers of new permanent members are intrinsic to the definition of permanent membership, the question of the veto has to be dealt with head on. We all know that however undemocratic the veto may be, it is here to stay with us for the foreseeable future. And it is not without a certain utility insofar as it helps prevent conflicts among the major Powers, which could undermine the United Nations. In fact, the San Francisco decision of 1945 concerning the veto was deliberately contrived to prevent the new Organization — the United Nations — from being plagued by what was regarded as the critical defect of the League: the non-membership of some of the great Powers.

It has been argued that the veto acts as a failsafe mechanism, or, as Inis Claude puts it,

> "the fuse in the electrical circuit... the proposition that it is better to have the lights go out than have the building burst into flames".

If that justification for the retention of the veto by the original five permanent members has any validity, then the question that arises is whether any new permanent member that is not given the veto is really deserving of that status. In short, the issue of the veto is not a question that can be postponed or discussed separately from the identity of new permanent members. And, for that matter, there is no way we can expect the general membership of the United Nations to accept being relegated from the current second-class status to a new third-class status by the creation of a new class of Security Council membership: permanent members without veto rights.

Here, I foresee a difficult problem to overcome, as none of the existing permanent members has expressed a commitment to extending the veto privilege to eventual new permanent members. Unless we approach that and other issues relating to Security Council reform in a pragmatic and realistic manner, we may only end up raising our hopes, but without any tangible results to show for it at the end of the day.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): The report on the work of the Security Council that has been submitted by the United Kingdom presidency details all the activities of the Council over the past year. I thank the Romanian delegation, which oversaw the drafting of the report, unanimously approved by the Security Council membership.

This exercise contributes towards the need for transparency in the Council's work and the development of critical exchanges between the Council and the General Assembly. The High-level Panel created by the Secretary-General will soon forward its recommendations on the reform of the Organization. They will most probably include proposals for improving the Security Council's working methods and for making it more effective. France will study the contents of that report with the greatest attention and in a constructive and open spirit.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council will also be among the subjects to be addressed by the Panel's report. In that regard, as the Foreign Minister of France recalled in his statement to the General Assembly on 16 September, France favours an increase in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. In that respect, we have voiced our support for the candidatures of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India, along with one African State.

France hopes that the coming year will provide an opportunity to register decisive progress on the road to the reform of the Organization, especially with respect to the expansion of the Council. France will continue to participate actively in the current debate on that subject.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fully agrees with the attention being given to issues involving threats to international peace and security such as the situation in Iraq, the situation in the Middle East, the question of Haiti and the general situation in Africa. Not only have those issues characterized the work of the United Nations over the past year but they have also underlined the importance of multilateralism and the urgent need to strengthen the role of our Organization.

However, we emphasize that it is important for the Security Council to define its priorities and to limit itself to the functions and responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, the Security Council must direct its action to those situations representing a definite threat to international peace and security and avoid deliberations and decisions that could entail interference in the internal affairs of States.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our position on some items on the agenda of the Security Council.

Venezuela firmly and categorically condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It reaffirms its commitment to combating terrorism and adds its efforts to those of other countries to combat that scourge, which is a threat to international peace and security. But we must say again that terrorism cannot be fought in a way that will unleash further terrorism. We must also uncover the causes of acts that are described as terrorism. Those causes are nothing other than the poverty and the exploitation to which the majority of the world population is subjected. We therefore reaffirm that the response to terrorism starts and ends with the protection and the promotion of human rights.

Venezuela shares the international community's deep concern at the current situation in Iraq. We reaffirm that the invasion of Iraq by United States

forces violates the United Nations Charter and international law. We express our solidarity with the people of Iraq in its rightful exercise of self-determination and in its fight to establish a sovereign and independent Government free from foreign Powers.

With respect to the Middle East, Venezuela is convinced that a lasting solution to the question of Palestine is the principal approach for restoring peace in the region. Venezuela endorses the agreements reached between Arabs and Israelis in the search for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. We reaffirm our support of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, and we support the right of States of the region to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders. We believe that a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). However, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is concerned at the recent military actions in the Gaza Strip, which have caused a high number of deaths and injuries among the civilian Palestinian population. We therefore insist that the aforementioned Security Council resolutions must be complied with. Our position has always been based on the principles of domestic and foreign policy contained in our Constitution, including the promotion and the protection of human rights — in this case, in order to contribute to peace in the Middle East.

With respect to Haiti, Venezuela considers it indispensable to carry out a thorough investigation of the causes of the overthrow and kidnapping of President Aristide. The well-being of the Haitians is of prime importance to us, and we believe that humanitarian aid to the people of that country must be maintained and strengthened. In the current year, Venezuela has given the following assistance to Haiti: $1 million from the budget of the Ministry of Finance, 2 million litres of fuel for the generation of electricity, $50,000 in direct assistance from the Special Fund for the Caribbean for food and medicine for the people of Haiti. Venezuela is attentively following the unfolding of events in Haiti and believes that the situation there should remain on the agenda of the United Nations.

With respect to Africa, we stress that Venezuela supports the efforts to protect human rights. In that context, while reaffirming respect for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of the Sudan, we consider that a peaceful solution ought to be found for the conflict in the Darfur region, thus protecting the civilian population of the country, which has been the most sorely affected by the conflict.

With respect to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council, the increase of its membership and related matters, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms that Security Council reform should be conceived as a thorough and structural change and that it must necessarily include the abolition of the veto power. Only thus can reform be positive, progressive and strictly adherent to multilateralism on both the question of balanced representation on the Council and on the increase of its membership.

Mr. Lippwe (Micronesia): I wish to make a brief comment on agenda item 53. The brevity of my statement is not intended to minimize either the importance of the issue before the Assembly today or my delegation's appreciation of the important and daunting task facing our Organization. Rather, it is in recognition of the fact that the time has come for us all to roll up our sleeves and set out to conclude the important work before us.

Today we find ourselves yet again discussing the question of equitable representation on, and increase in the membership of, the Security Council. While the topic has been on the agenda for years now, the lack of progress has been a concern to my delegation.

Today, again, the delegation of Micronesia joins with many other members of this body in calling for attention to be given to the reform of the United Nations. We need a strong and effective United Nations — a United Nations that is able to better respond effectively to the challenges of a new era.

First and foremost, we call on all the Members of this Organization to give fresh consideration to reforming the Security Council in such a way as to better reflect present-day realities. We note the increased and expanded scope of the role of the Security Council in the promotion of international peace and security. Such an expanded role must be carried out with maximum cooperation and participation from the international community. In order to meet emerging challenges, we see the need to reform and enlarge the Security Council so that it becomes truly representative in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. A more balanced and representative Security Council would

lead to greater international acceptance of the work of the Council and would better meet the expectations of people around the globe. At the same time, the Council should not grow so big as to hamper its effectiveness. The developing world, finding itself marginalized in the current set-up of the Council, should hold a fair number of seats.

Particular consideration must be given to Japan, one of the largest contributors to the United Nations budget and a major participant in United Nations peacekeeping. Japan has consistently committed substantial resources to the Organization and to the maintenance of global peace and security. Any reform of the Security Council would be incomplete without Japan's becoming a permanent member. My delegation also believes that Germany and India deserve inclusion as members on a reformed Council.

Finally, while members of the Assembly are discussing the reform of our Organization, my delegation believes that attention must also be given to certain obsolete provisions of the United Nations Charter. The time has come for the "enemy state" clauses in the United Nations Charter to be removed.

It is my delegation's hope that decades of pronouncements will now be translated into action. We are encouraged that the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change appointed by the Secretary-General to consider matters of peace and security will begin to come forward with concrete and practical recommendations to make the United Nations more responsive to global realties. Micronesia looks forward to the Panel's report and is ready to do its part as a responsible Member of the Organization.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, for presenting the annual report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly. By combining analytical components and comprehensive factual material, this document adds to the promising trend of the last several years towards improving the quality of these annual guides to the Council's activities.

During the period under review, from August 2003 through July 2004, the international community continued to face numerous daunting challenges which directly relate to the Security Council's main sphere of responsibility: the maintenance of international peace and security. What is the nature of these challenges? Has the Council succeeded in identifying — if not preventing — potential threats in a timely manner? Was that body's performance in resolving crises and conflict situations adequate and effective? Has the Security Council made progress in developing a forward-looking strategy to respond to future global threats? Those are just a few of the questions to be addressed, and they are not merely rhetorical.

Ukraine is convinced that the Security Council should continue to use its unique potential to mobilize the international community to fight terrorism. The vicious series of heinous terrorist attacks committed around the world leaves no doubt that the very system of peace and security set up and promoted by the United Nations is at stake.

We trust that the establishment of a new, effective system of information exchange on terrorism will be helpful in preventing the spread of this scourge. The framework established by the Security Council for a global response to international terrorism has to be maintained and reinforced. In that regard, we believe the adoption of resolution 1566 (2004) will further strengthen the essential coordinating role of the United Nations in the international campaign against the terrorist threat. The Counter-Terrorism Committee should continue its proactive dialogue with Member States. We hope that its Executive Directorate will be fully operational in the very near future.

The Security Council has managed to overcome past differences over the Iraqi issue, showing unity in addressing that problem. We firmly believe that the Council's instruments are very important for normalizing the situation in that country. Ukraine welcomes the Council's clear definition of the United Nations role in Iraq. Security Council resolution 1546 (2004) achieves one of the main objectives pursued by Ukraine, namely that the United Nations should play a substantial and tangible role in the electoral and reconstruction processes in Iraq. My country pledges its assistance to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in carrying out his demanding mission.

We believe that the Security Council could do more than just hold monthly briefings and rare open debates in dealing with the crisis in the Middle East. Resolution 1515 (2003), with its endorsement of the Quartet's road map, has become a truly important step

forward. It has reaffirmed the wide consensus in the international community that that plan provides the best way to realize the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. But additional concerted efforts are absolutely indispensable to achieving this result.

My delegation commends the Security Council for its efforts in Afghanistan. Although main responsibility for finding a political solution to the Afghan issue lies squarely with the Afghan people themselves, we are convinced that the Security Council should continue to be actively involved in resolving all the various aspects of that issue.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through non-State actors remains a major threat to international peace and security. We are convinced that the Security Council must play a role in the multilateral efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Therefore we welcome the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004), which gave an additional dimension to those efforts. Ukraine believes that it is important for the Council to provide assistance in implementing this resolution to States that may require it.

Another issue to which I would like to draw the Assembly's attention relates to the problem of the so-called frozen conflicts, which were left as unhealed scars in the newly independent States that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The international community cannot turn a blind eye to the lack of progress in the settlement of conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia, and in Nagorny Karabakh, the Republic of Azerbaijan. There is also an urgent need to resolve the Transdniestrian conflict. Postponing a final settlement of those crises might have irreversible consequences. We call on international organizations, above all the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other important bodies involved, to accelerate their respective efforts in resolving those conflicts.

In the Balkan region, following the March outburst of violence in Kosovo, there have been encouraging developments towards mending the damage caused to inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation. The Security Council should continue to keep the situation in Kosovo under close scrutiny.

We welcome the trend towards the further strengthening of cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations. Over the past decade, there have been quite a few encouraging examples of how United Nations peacekeeping missions can be effectively supported and complemented by United Nations-mandated operations of other organizations. The United Nations could and should actively use this important practical tool and increasingly rely on regional structures to assume more responsibilities.

In that regard, we are satisfied to see increased interaction between the Council and its partners in Africa. Making full use of the expertise of African organizations has proved to be the most effective way of dealing with African conflicts. For that reason, we feel that, confronted with the crisis in Darfur, the Security Council should follow the same path by providing the African Union with the necessary resources and political support.

I think I express our common conviction by saying that lessons learned by the international community during the past year have strengthened our resolve to make the Security Council more powerful, unified and proactive. We trust that that goal can be reached, first and foremost through comprehensive Security Council reform in all its aspects. Ukraine considers the reform of the Council to be a process of exceptional international significance. Making that body more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent, especially with regard to the decision-making process, is a prerequisite for success in the overall adaptation of the United Nations to the challenging realities of today's world.

We take positive note of the increased international attention to the issue of reform that was expressly articulated in this Hall just two weeks ago during the Assembly's general debate. I would like now to briefly recall some basic elements of my country's position on this issue.

First, Ukraine believes Security Council reform should be carried out in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Secondly, we attach primary importance to the allocation of an additional non-permanent seat to the Group of Eastern European States. Thirdly, the interests of all regional Groups should be taken into

account in the process of the enlargement of the Council.

The delegation of Ukraine pins high hopes on relevant recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and pledges its constructive cooperation.

Mr. Jeenbaev (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): Today I am delivering one of my first statements in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly. I wish to take this opportunity, Sir, to welcome you in your important position as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to wish you great success in your endeavours.

At the current session, we are once again discussing a key issue relating to the development of the work of the Organization, an issue that has been on our agenda for more than 10 years and which, without any exaggeration, is of concern to all those for whom the United Nations is a common home.

Just a little more than a week separates us from the date when together we will all celebrate the fifty-ninth anniversary of the creation of our Organization. During those years, the world has changed fundamentally. Scholars have made a study of fallen empires on whose remnants new States have emerged. The international situation too has changed drastically. The world breathed a sigh of relief following the end of the cold war; then came new threats and challenges, first and foremost international terrorism in all its forms.

The United Nations family has added 140 new Members since its creation, and we realize today that new measures are required in order to breathe fresh life into work of the Security Council, the fundamental organ of the Organization, and to ensure that an expanded Council will be able to react appropriately to the events taking place in a rapidly changing world. Any organ or mechanism can become old or worn out, and the timely influx of new blood or the replacement of worn-out parts helps to rejuvenate and strengthen its work.

For example, we are considering the need for and feasibility of reforming the Security Council through increasing its membership and ensuring more equitable representation. The Kyrgyz Republic is ready to support proposals aimed at bringing the Organization fully into line with the realities of the new twenty-first century. Today many States on various continents are playing an increasing international role. Without detracting from the activities of any other State, we wish to note the active position of Germany and Japan in international affairs, their financial contribution to the work of the United Nations and the political and economic weight of these States on the international scene.

We take this opportunity to recall the words of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, as expressed from this rostrum at the 13th meeting of the current session: that "the United Nations at its anniversary session can and must decide to include Germany and Japan among the permanent members of the Council".

The Kyrgyz Republic has frequently said that the optimum would be to expand the Council's membership to 25, with seven permanent members, on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. Moreover, we are convinced that the Security Council should be guided primarily by the interests of humankind as a whole, resolving issues of a global nature and avoiding lobbying by regional groups or other groups of countries to further their own interests.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): We welcome the report of the Security Council (A/59/2), introduced by this month's Council President, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sir Emyr Jones Parry. The report highlights the challenges and successes of various United Nations peacekeeping missions and peacemaking efforts. One of these is the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), the mission in my country, Timor-Leste.

On this occasion, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation to Security Council members for their support to the mission. Without their strong commitment, and that of our neighbours and of the international community at large, our people would not have achieved peace, freedom, democracy and human rights.

In May next year, the peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste will be terminated. In a meeting last week between the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, we reiterated our view that the people of Timor-Leste continue to need a United Nations presence to support the justice, finance and police sectors.

With respect to other issues referred to in the Security Council's report, we would like to highlight the situation in Darfur, in the Sudan. We believe that cooperation between the Security Council, the African Union and the Sudanese Government is the best way to bring peace and to protect the lives of all peoples in the region.

Regarding Western Sahara and Palestine and other conflicts under consideration, we urge the Security Council to continue its efforts to devise new initiatives in order to find a peaceful solution that is acceptable to the peoples concerned.

The United Nations is the most precious creation of a generation of great and visionary leaders. We all have inherited this Organization; the memory of the destruction and brutality, and the suffering of our fellow human beings, during the Second World War, and the profound desire to save future generations from another, even more devastating war greatly influenced the founding members in shaping the United Nations Charter and in providing the powers necessary to the different organs to fulfil their mandates.

On the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, we have to recognize that, while it is true that our world and our peoples have not experienced a massive worldwide war, internal conflicts have ravaged many of our peoples, many millions of fellow human beings have died, and many millions are still suffering.

Our world has changed; there are new challenges and new threats. The membership of the United Nations has increased from 51 to 191, and we all recognize the changes that have occurred and the need for the Organization to adapt.

We welcome the Security Council's proactive role in dealing with terrorism through the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001). We commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established by General Assembly resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993 to facilitate discussions on reform of the Security Council. We are also waiting expectantly for the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

On the issue of the reform of the Security Council, we have already expressed our support for the paper put forward by France and Germany which recognizes the need to enlarge the Council to around 24 members.

As my Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ramos-Horta, has stated, we believe that developed countries such as Japan and Germany, and developing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia and India should be allocated permanent seats on the Security Council. We also support the allocation of two or more permanent seats to Africa, in accordance with the decision taken by the heads of State and Government of the African Union at the Harare Summit.

We believe that there is a need for the majority of us — those medium and small countries that are not candidates for permanent seats — to continue to exchange views in order to ensure that the rights of our nations and peoples are better represented and protected.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): I would like first to thank Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report of the Security Council to this body yesterday morning. My delegation fully agrees with the assertion that the work of the Security Council was intensive during the reporting period, and it is particularly gratifying that the Council was able to overcome the divisions and discord brought about by the military action in Iraq and to move forward in a constructive way in fulfilling its responsibility to maintain international peace and stability.

The past months have once again proved the central role of the United Nations in general and the leading role of the Security Council as an irreplaceable instrument of the international community in the maintenance of world peace and security.

Concerning agenda item 53, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", my delegation fully shares the view that the issue of Security Council reform — which is long overdue — is key to the overall reform of the United Nations. In that respect, we commend the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session for his hard work and the Open-ended Working Group on having made some progress on cluster 2 issues last year. The Working Group, however, remains deadlocked and unable to agree on the most important cluster 1 issues, including the enlargement of the

Security Council, the question of regional representation, the criteria for membership, the use of the veto, accountability, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and so on.

Indeed, if the Security Council is to carry on its role as the principal organ for effective multilateralism and deal with existing and emerging threats and challenges, it has to be thoroughly reformed. It is our expectation that the Secretary-General will come up with breakthrough reform proposals on the basis of the report and the recommendations made by the High-level Panel.

Mongolia shares the view that the composition of the Security Council should better reflect current world realities. My delegation wishes to stress that enlargement is not a goal in itself. The need for enlargement arises from the necessity to ensure the right balance of representation in this important body as well as the credibility of its decisions. As stipulated in paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter:

> "[The] Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf."

The Security Council thus represents all Members. Yet, over the past 59 years, the ratio of that representation has decreased by a factor of 2.7 compared to what it was at the time of the Organization's inception. The issue is therefore how to ensure that the composition of the Security Council duly reflects the current realities of the general membership.

Mongolia supports a just and equitable enlargement of the Security Council through an increase in the number of both permanent and elected seats, with the representation of developing and developed countries ensured. It is hard to understand why Africa and Latin America do not have any permanent seats in the Council. Likewise, I do not think that it is just or right that Asia — home to more than half of the world's population — has only one permanent seat. Why should Japan, whose contribution to the United Nations budget exceeds that of four current permanent members combined, be denied a permanent membership?

My delegation is of the view that, in selecting additional permanent members, a package approach could be adopted, including criteria such as geographical distribution, a genuine commitment to the goals and objectives of the United Nations, and a capacity to contribute substantially to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that respect, Mongolia supports the legitimate aspirations of countries such as Japan, Germany and India, which are willing and able to shoulder greater responsibility in pursuit of international peace, security and development. The composition of the Security Council should be small enough to work effectively and large enough to duly represent the current United Nations membership.

We all know that the greatest strength of the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular is their legitimacy. It is our belief that, if the general membership has a feeling of being rightly represented in the Council, its decisions will bear more legitimacy and credibility and the Member States' willingness to abide by its decisions will naturally increase, thus greatly enhancing the moral and political impacts of its actions. However, such compliance cannot be taken for granted if the perception of the legitimacy of the Council's decisions is in doubt among the wider United Nations membership.

Another important aspect of the Security Council's reform relates to the very way it works and functions. That body ought to be democratized. Historical evidence clearly proves that the veto power has been used more often in defence of the national interests of the permanent members than for the sake of a common cause, and has thus become one of the main impediments to the effectiveness of the work of the Council. In that regard, a comprehensive review of the veto power should be one of the first priorities. We believe that the proposals offered by some delegations on limiting the veto power to matters under Chapter VII deserve our close attention. The veto could be replaced gradually by consensual decision-making.

The further democratization of the work of the Council through increased transparency and openness is also important, especially in the context of reviewing its relationship with the General Assembly. We note some progress in that direction.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council as an institution also depend on the further

elaboration and development of the specific responsibilities of permanent members and elected members alike. If we manage to overcome the structural weaknesses of the Security Council and to create such a built-in incentive, a clear-cut sense of common responsibility will emerge and all the Security Council members could work closely together for the common good. Privileges should come with increased responsibilities. My delegation would like to stress that the reform of the Security Council and its empowerment should progress in parallel, not in detriment to the increased authority and role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations.

The reform of the Security Council, and especially its expansion, require the taking of bold political decisions. Perhaps the more than 10 years of fruitless talks and deadlock prompted the Secretary General to establish the High-level Panel of experts. We should be mindful that time is of the essence. If we keep failing in our efforts to reach a consensus and to solve the issue of the reform of the Security Council, voices for solving the institutional reform outside United Nations bodies could take the upper hand. We sincerely hope that genuine political will and determination among us will prevail at last.

Mr. U Win Mra (Myanmar): At the outset, I should like to thank the President of the Security Council for October for introducing the annual report of the Council for the period under review. Since the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States in accordance with the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter, it is only natural that they be kept informed of the work of the Council to enable them to analyse and give their views thereon.

My delegation welcomes various improvements in the Council's working methods to promote transparency and accountability to the wider membership. The increased use of public meetings; monthly meetings between the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Council; consultations by the Council's President with regional groups; and regular briefings by the Council's presidency for non-members have been cited among some improvements of the Council's working methods.

The recent consultations between some members of the Security Council and members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the participation of non-members in a meeting of the Security Council Working Group on peacekeeping are also considered to be positive developments in the relationship between the Security Council and the United Nations membership as a whole.

Despite some of those improvements, my delegation is of the view that the report should be more comprehensive, substantive and analytical if we are to have a better understanding of the Council's work. Moreover, the timely submission of the Council's report is essential to enable the Assembly to effectively respond to it.

There is now a growing tendency to engage in thematic discussions in the Council. That is a welcome development, as it allows greater participation of Member States in the discussions. However, my delegation is of the view that thematic discussions carried out by the Council, especially on issues that do not fall within the mandate to maintain international peace and security, can be counterproductive.

My delegation hails the important work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Myanmar unequivocally condemns terrorism in all forms and manifestations. We are cooperating closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee. In that, regard I would like to inform the Assembly that Myanmar has signed or acceded to 11 of the 12 international legal instruments related to terrorism. It has also submitted its third report to the Committee.

Let me now turn to the question of the reform of the Security Council. The debate on reform has been going on for more than a decade without, however, having produced tangible results. The progress achieved in consideration of the cluster II issues dealing with the working methods of the Council is an encouraging development. Regarding the question of increase in membership of the Council, notwithstanding the widespread convergence of views in favour of its increase to better reflect the current realities, there are still substantial differences of view concerning the size of the Council.

My delegation is of the view that the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories so as to be more representative and reflective of contemporary political and economic

realities. We would also like to underline the importance of the need to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council in its expansion. Since the veto is considered to be anachronistic, discriminatory and undemocratic, its use should be curtailed preparatory to its complete elimination. It is also our view that, in the expanded Council, the new permanent members should enjoy the same rights and privileges as the current members.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, heads of State or Government decided that efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects should be intensified. In this regard, the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities on Threats, Challenges and Change, established by the Secretary-General, could act as a catalyst in giving further impetus to the reform of the Council. We look forward with keen interest to its recommendations.

My delegation commends the good work done by the Chairman of the Working Group on Security Council reform, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and the members of his Bureau. In my delegation's view, the six topics put forward by the Bureau for discussion in the Working Group remain as valid as ever. Those topics should continue to be used as a basis for discussion at the fifty-ninth session, building upon the work done during the previous session and with a view to facilitating the process of reaching general agreement on the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for our consideration.

The annual discussion of the report of the Security Council in plenary meeting is, we believe, a necessary practice that promotes follow-up and monitoring of the work of the Security Council by all Members of the Organization. We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its previous session, Mr. Julian Hunte, as well as the Permanent Representatives of Ecuador and of Liechtenstein, for their efforts in the context of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

The international community is facing new and major challenges in the area of peace and security. Events in recent years have, without doubt, had a negative effect on our Organization, particularly the Security Council, as the main body entrusted with collective security.

At the same time, the United Nations is involved in a comprehensive reform process aimed at enabling it to adapt its structure and functioning to current realities and to make it more effective and more credible with regard to its capacity to respond and react rapidly. There can be no doubt that the current level of representation on the Security Council — which has only 15 members — is not in keeping with international realities. Since the creation of the Organization, not only has the number of countries Members of the Organization increased disproportionately in relation to the number of members of the Council, but the axis of global power in 1945, reflected in the distribution of permanent seats on the Council, has changed. In the light of that fact, there can be no doubt that the Security Council must change to reflect the new international realities.

Argentina believes that the reform of the Council must be carried out within the broader process of United Nations reform. Likewise, that cannot happen if broad consensus is not achieved first. It cannot be an isolated event; nor can it be partial — limited solely to an increase in the number of members. Its working methods must be reformed with a view to increasing its transparency and efficiency.

The Security Council must be more representative — that is clear. But it must also be more democratic. That has been the traditional position of our country. Our delegation was a participant in the San Francisco Conference of 1945 and, referring to the right to veto, we stated at the time that we were not opposed to it, since what is just and desirable in a legal sense may not be politically possible.

Speaking to the General Assembly in 1946, the first Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador José Arce, stated that the right to veto should be eliminated in favour of the exercise of the combined will of two thirds or three quarters of the members of the Council. While today it may be politically impossible to completely eliminate the veto, we believe that

conditions do exist to limit its use solely to cases provided for under Chapter VII of the Charter.

As Argentina has reaffirmed since the discussions on Council reform began, we support an increase in the membership of the Council — but only in the non-permanent category. The permanent seats are the result of a special situation existing after the Second World War, as is the right to veto, which was granted to the permanent members.

Argentina has an open position on Council reform. We can explore different alternatives and mobilize the international community in the process of reform in order to find formulas that are better adapted to the work that we are doing. Argentina is not against anyone; we are simply in favour of a much more democratic Security Council.

We await with interest the report of the High-level Panel convened by the Secretary-General, and we trust that it will be able to provide positive elements that enable us to move forward in the process of reform.

Argentina has contributed to the work of the Panel by submitting a position paper dealing with various matters, including Security Council reform. The proposals of the Panel must be considered by the General Assembly. As we all know, that is the only body that can take a decision on reform. Any development related to reform must be carried out by means of recommendations submitted in due course to the General Assembly by the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Such recommendations should be adopted by general agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the objective of Security Council reform is to ensure compliance with the purposes of the United Nations, respecting the interests of all Member States. Only in that way can we strengthen the main body entrusted with collective security.

The images that we see daily in the media should prompt us not to make a mistake but to act for the future of our Organization — which is the future of humanity as a whole. Let us not miss this opportunity. Let us carry out reform in the interests of the democratization and efficiency of the Security Council.

Mr. Beck (Palau): In pursuit of the most effective means of strengthening the credibility of the United Nations, Palau urges this body to reform the Security Council so that it reflects the realities of the international community in the twenty-first century. It is our belief that countries that consistently play a major role in the maintenance of international peace and security should always participate in the decision-making processes of the Security Council.

Palau believes that the Security Council should be expanded to include developing and developed countries as new members. While several countries — on the basis of their active world leadership, their large populations and their geographic positions — are appropriate candidates for permanent membership in a reformed Security Council, Palau wishes at this time to specifically endorse only Japan. Japan's stellar record of contribution to the United Nations and its leadership in international initiatives for many years constitute a solid and undeniable basis for its assumption of permanent membership in the Security Council.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): We would like to associate ourselves with the call — made by the representatives of many delegations who have spoken before us — for bold and comprehensive reform of the United Nations system. We agree that such reform should aim for the greatest possible effectiveness, credibility, legitimacy and transparency.

We are also convinced of the need for enhanced cooperation among the organs of the United Nations. In that respect, Germany has suggested, first, strengthening the role of the General Assembly by better focussing and streamlining our work; secondly, making use of the potential of the Economic and Social Council as the central organ for decision-making on economic and social issues and as a partner of the Security Council in peacekeeping and peace-building; and thirdly, opening up forums on peacekeeping to a wider group of interested States among the United Nations membership, thus ensuring better interaction between the membership and the Security Council.

Among our efforts to increase the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations, reform of the Security Council is certainly among the most important. In recent years, the responsibilities and competences of the Security Council have constantly expanded. The number of conflicts demanding Council involvement is increasing. In the future, we want to place even more stress on crisis prevention and peace-building. Such a comprehensive approach will require

additional resources as well as closer cooperation among Member States and among United Nations organs.

At the same time, the Council must deal with new threats to international security. Failing States, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction raise the question of whether the Charter and international law provide the instruments necessary to deal with those new challenges. The responsibility to protect, the legality of pre-emptive military action and the question of how to prevent impunity in cases of gross human rights violations are some of the issues that must be addressed. In that regard, we are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in early December.

The Security Council has responded to some of these new threats by embarking on an increasingly legislative role, setting rules for the international community. That is true for the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and for that of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), as well as for resolution 1566 (2004) on terrorism, adopted by the Council as recently as 8 October this year.

When the Security Council legislates, it sets rules for the United Nations membership as a whole. That means that 15 Security Council members decide and 176 United Nations Members plus 191 parliaments are excluded from the decision-making process. Against that background, it is essential to change the structure of the Council of 1945 to enable it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Here, two elements, in our view, are of the utmost importance: first, the Security Council — especially when is it legislating — needs more legitimacy through better representativity; and secondly, the Security Council must include, on a permanent basis, major resource providers and major regional players. To face those challenges, the Council must be able to implement its decisions effectively and must be seen as legitimate. We believe that the Council can achieve that only if it reflects the political changes of the past 50 years and today's geopolitical realities.

The conclusion to be drawn from this need to adapt the Security Council to today's demands is essentially twofold.

First, the composition of the Council should reflect the growth in United Nations membership and give the Council added legitimacy by increasing the number of permanent as well as non-permanent members. Decolonization, new non-nuclear global players, the end of the cold war, the increase in United Nations membership to 191 countries — all those developments should be mirrored in the composition and working methods of the Security Council.

Secondly, all regions of the South should be represented by permanent members. That would offer us the chance to further enhance the voice of the developing world in the Council. We do not agree with those who want to deny permanent seats to the developing world in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Expanding the Council only by increasing the number of non-permanent seats would not change the structure of the Council; on the contrary, adding only non-permanent seats would cement the outdated structure of 1945.

Therefore, in our view, countries that are willing and able to make a particularly meaningful contribution to the maintenance of world peace should become permanent members. That applies to major resource providers among the developed countries as well as to major players in the developing world.

For those reasons, we have decided to take on the responsibility associated with a permanent seat, and we support the readiness of Brazil, India and Japan to do the same. Again, I would like to stress that we consider it particularly important that Africa also be adequately represented among the new permanent members.

We look forward to the ideas of the High-level Panel, as we believe that they will provide very important new impetus for the crucial question of reform. I am confident that, during the present session of the General Assembly, all of us will work together on that question with commitment and creativity.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the General Assembly in your usual outstanding manner. I should like to express to you our gratitude for having devoted the meetings of the past two days to the consideration of agenda items 11 and 53, relating, respectively, to the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) and to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the

membership of the Security Council and related matters.

My statement will deal only with item 53 of the agenda. In that connection, Sir, we wish first of all to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte of Saint Lucia, who during the previous session chaired in an able and dedicated manner the Open-ended Working Group charged with considering this important question. We wish also to commend his two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. The excellent report before us today is an accurate reflection of their strong belief in the importance of the task entrusted to them: to meet the deep aspirations of the States and peoples of the world to see rapid and substantial reform in the Security Council in terms of both its composition and its functioning.

That strong aspiration can be explained by the following: the accession since 1960 of a large number of States to national sovereignty; the extent and complexity of the tasks confronting the United Nations today; the recent emergence of new challenges to international peace and security; and the desire for a more transparent and more democratic management of our Organization, which we hold so dear.

All of those factors should lead us to cross, in a positive and progressive spirit, the Rubicon and to transform the Security Council into an organ that is truly representative of Member States and that is better prepared to carry out the tasks with which it is entrusted in the Charter of the United Nations. Such a readjustment is even more necessary given that the ratio of Security Council members to General Assembly members, which was 11 to 51 in 1945, or 21.56 per cent, is distinctly higher than the current ratio, which is only 15 to 191, or 7.85 per cent.

These figures illustrate the considerable decline in the rate of representation of Member States in the Security Council, and show that an important United Nations organ is frozen in time, a prisoner of its own procedures, whereas the international context has undergone profound transformations since 1945.

In view of the magnitude of the task ahead of us, Africa — with all 55 African Member States speaking with one voice — has already clearly indicated its firm will to play a part in a restructured Security Council that is adapted to its environment. Indeed the declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity — which has since become the African Union — adopted at Harare on 4 June 1997 recommended an expansion of the Security Council to 26 members. In that framework, the African continent would have two permanent and five non-permanent seats which it would allocate to African States according to a system of a rotation based on criteria predetermined by the Africans themselves.

Senegal shares the view of the majority of States that the right to veto is inequitable, discriminatory and anachronistic, and that therefore we need progressively to eliminate it, in the meantime reducing its scope of application to draft resolutions relating to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Against that backdrop, I wish to reiterate here a proposal that the delegation of Senegal made in 1997 that an in-depth debate be taken up with the current permanent members of the Security Council in order to work with them to arrive at realistic approaches to the temporary use of the veto.

Another important issue considered by the Working Group involves the criteria that must be met in order to be a member of the Security Council. There are two, set out in Article 23 of the Charter: the capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and respect for the principle of equitable geographic representation. While the second condition should pose no problem, the first is sometimes seen from a restrictive point of view as relating only to financial contributions to peacekeeping operations and their implementation.

Senegal, which, since joining the United Nations, has been a major contributor of troops to peacekeeping operations, cannot accept such a narrow definition. We must therefore take into account the human aspect of contributions to peacekeeping operations as well as new criteria such as the rule of law and a sense of international responsibility on the part of Member States.

My delegation welcomes the report's view of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Throughout the years we have noted a worrisome trend towards the increasing pre-eminence of the Security Council over the General Assembly. Indeed, the Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, more and more

frequently is seized with questions falling within a broader scope than that of its mandate. I refer here to the numerous thematic items that are considered by the Security Council, which are, according to the letter and spirit of the Charter, within the purview of the General Assembly.

A rebalancing of the tasks of the Security Council and the General Assembly is therefore necessary. To that end, it would suffice to work on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Charter. The effectiveness of the future action of our universal Organization is at stake.

I wish in conclusion to reiterate my delegation's determination to support all initiatives that will need to be undertaken in order to meet the challenge of reforming the Security Council. In that difficult but feasible exercise, all of us without exception will need plenty of realism, pragmatism and faith in the future in order to contribute to strengthening the credibility of the Security Council, an organ so vital to the structure of the United Nations and, for that reason, so useful in the promotion of international peace and security.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): On item 11, I would like to thank and express my most sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, for his very effective and balanced presentation of the annual report of the Security Council. We have a vision, we have good suggestions, and a sense of direction. There has definitely been an improvement as far as transparency, inclusiveness and accountability are concerned.

Of course, a lot more remains to be done, as Ambassador Baali of Algeria, among many others, has pointed out. We are sure that the High-level Panel report will offer a meaningful contribution to our thoughts on this issue.

I will come now to the other item on our agenda, the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and related matters. Our most sincere appreciation goes to the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Julian Hunte, for the commitment, political flair and determination that he has shown in pushing forward the agenda. My thanks and sincere appreciation also go to Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein for their outstanding contributions.

I will focus here on a few key principles — in fact six principles — that Italy feels are crucial for carrying out successful reform.

Principle No. 1: broad consensus. Like any constitutional reform in any of our countries (I mean those countries that have a written constitution), reform of the Security Council should not have divisive repercussions within the membership, otherwise it will defeat the very purpose of United Nations reform. Any reform proposal will have to build upon a broad political consensus. Every effort should therefore be made by all of us, in a spirit of flexibility and pragmatism, to promote an approach that will be able to command broad support in the Assembly. From this point of view, the Secretary-General's Panel, and if I may say so, the Secretary-General himself, should seek to promote such consensus for an equitable and comprehensive reform proposal. I note that even countries that are in favour of an increase in the number of permanent members are well aware of the need for broad consensus, since only broad consensus will prevent disaffection among Member States, which would otherwise be tempted to disengage from the process. If States disengage, there will be no possibility of creating a more effective and efficient United Nations.

In this vein, may I recall what Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said yesterday. He said, "We would encourage all Member States to engage constructively in the debate in order to find a solution on which all can agree." Let me also quote what our Russian colleague, Ambassador Denisov, said a few hours ago: "the achievement of the broadest possible consensus should remain the key benchmark in the reform process." Today and yesterday many other colleagues, from Algeria to China and New Zealand (on behalf of Canada, Australia, New Zealand), Argentina and Mexico, inter alia, have spoken along the same lines about the need for a broad consensus.

Principle No. 2: the current imbalance in the North-South presence on the Security Council. There is a fundamental and urgent need to address this issue, if we wish to have a Security Council more in tune with the world of today, and therefore more credible and effective. I think that there is definitely common ground among the Membership here as well. But I doubt whether it would make sense, given the widely perceived need for more equitable representation, to increase the number of permanent members by five

seats, and give 40 per cent of the benefit to two countries of the industrialized world. There has to be a better way to more effectively redress the North-South imbalance.

Principle No. 3: comprehensiveness. In other words, what is needed, and what we want, is a "whole-package approach" in the reform process, one that is aimed at strengthening the United Nations and enhancing its ability to meet current and future challenges effectively in the field of peace and security, and also, and with equal priority, in the field of development. We will have to address policy, as well as institutional, issues, above and beyond the matter of Security Council enlargement. Among those issues, I would mention, inter alia, the refocusing of the interrelationship among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council; and the redefining of the working methods of the Security Council. I would like here to recall what our colleague from New Zealand expressed so clearly yesterday, when he said, "first, including Security Council reform within a broader package may increase rather than decrease the prospect of achieving consensus on it. Secondly, the Security Council is at the core of the United Nation's response to threats to international security ... Accordingly, proposals for enhancing collective action in dealing with a broad spectrum of threats cannot sensibly be separated from the issue of the representativeness of the Council. What the Council does and who is sitting on it are inextricably linked".

In other words, it would make neither common nor political sense to de-link our proceedings: reforming and enlarging the Security Council during the first months of 2005, and proceeding on the substantive issues of what the Security Council, and in more general terms, the United Nations, must deliver, in the second part of the year, in the framework of the major event of 2005, as well as in the follow up to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel.

In fact, on the contrary, separate consideration of the issue of Security Council expansion will not prevent the sidelining of the other major recommendations of the Panel. That is why we support a comprehensive review in 2005 of major United Nations conferences, within the umbrella framework of the Millenniums Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

As for the report of the High-level Panel, allow me, again, to recall what Ambassador Jones Parry said in urging the Panel to make sure that its proposals reinforce the Council's ability to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter. I would also here reiterate the thought so aptly expressed by our New Zealand colleague when he said, "we urge Member States not to seek to pre-empt the Panel's report, but rather to respect the Panel's independence and keep an open mind on possible ways forward".

Principle No. 4: inclusiveness, and principle No. 5: accountability. I will address them together because they are inextricably linked. I will begin by recalling, once again, what our New Zealand colleague said yesterday: "we look to enhanced opportunities for Security Council membership for all Member Sates, not just a privileged few".

That is why the proposal to add new permanent members, even without veto power, would entail serious drawbacks. It would be highly divisive among the United Nations membership, and would establish a new layer of hierarchy within the Council itself. Do we really want to have a first-class membership, a second-class membership and a third-class membership? The United Nations, as the Chinese Foreign Minister recently recalled, is not a corporate concern, a company or a fund listed on the stock exchange, with class A shares, class B shares and class C shares.

Whatever the so-called G-4 may say, and however attractive the packaging of that reform scenario might be, the fact is that we would be laying the foundation for what would become, by definition, new privileges for some members to the detriment of others. And that would go against the tide in a world where priority is now given, and has to be given, to an ongoing process of democratization in the management of international relations through multilateral institutions. Every Member State of this Assembly, as a stake-holder, should feel comfortable and should feel that it will be able to participate and contribute more equitably. I ask you, would the addition of new permanent members, who are not accountable to the membership through elections, make this happen?

Let us keep clear in our minds that the enlargement of the Security Council, whatever shape it takes, will be limited. The figure generally mentioned

is around 24 members. With a higher number of members, the Security Council would not be effective and efficient. If that is the case, it has to be clear to all Member States that we have a zero-sum game. If we increase the number of permanent members, there will be less room for the rest of the membership, which must compete for the non-permanent seats. We will give seats, let us suppose, to five Member States, which would become permanent members. What we give to them we will be taking away from what the other 181 Member States have the right to expect with regard to their possibility of making a direct contribution to shaping the Security Council's actions and policies.

Let us not forget that after 60 years, there are still 77 countries — 40 per cent of the membership — that have never served on the Security Council. How best can we address that situation? Certainly not by increasing the number of members of the Security Council and by freezing more than half the increase — five of nine seats — in favour of a few members.

Moreover, adding new permanent members would, by definition, go against the principle of accountability, according to which all members of the Security Council should undergo periodic scrutiny through elections in the General Assembly. Let us not forget that in its action, the Organization is stressing more and more — and preaching to Members — the need to improve governance. And improving governance means improving accountability because accountability is the substance of democracy and the foundation for healthy and sound development.

Principle No. 6: is the need to strengthen the role and the weight of the regional and geopolitical factor in the Security Council. On this issue, too, I feel that there is common ground among the membership, and we will have to build on it. Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa spoke very clearly yesterday of the importance of placing greater emphasis on Chapter VIII of the Charter and on the operational relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations. Ambassador Baali of Algeria and others have spoken along the same lines.

I would therefore say that any proposal for reform of the Security Council should focus on the importance of the regional and geopolitical factor, regional constituencies and regional interests rather than national interests. To that end, a closer relationship should be built between elected members and their regional constituencies. That would enhance the accountability of elected members and ensure that deliberations are perceived as more legitimate.

In other words, more should be done to give relevance and weight to regional and geopolitical realities within the United Nations system and in the Security Council. As far as Italy is concerned, as a founding member of the European Union, the depositary of its treaties and the host of the solemn signature on 29 October of the new European Constitution, we believe that today's European Union, with the strength 25 of members, has a fundamental contribution to make to the purposes of the United Nations. Italy is working to find, on a consensual basis, ways and means to allow the European Union to speak in the Security Council with a single, more influential voice. We realize, of course, that it will not be an easy path and that within the United Nations each regional constituency finds itself at a different stage of political and socio-economic development. Nonetheless, we feel that we must stay the course and not jeopardize the achievement of that goal.

In the meantime, to sum up, we will have to shape Security Council reform so that such reform better responds to the contribution that each Member State is capable of and willing to offer for the maintenance of peace and security and the other purposes of the United Nations, as foreseen in Article 23, paragraph 1 of the Charter; gives more appropriate weight to the regional and geopolitical factor while at the same time redressing the current North-South imbalance; and takes into account the need to ensure, through the election of all members of the Security Council, accountability, inclusiveness and ownership by the membership.

To accommodate all those principles, values and needs, we will have to be flexible, dispense with entrenched positions and keep our minds open to new and bold scenarios of reform. That reform could be centred, for example, on the concept of the rotation of elected members for a given seat, not excluding the possibility of a longer duration and/or a more frequent presence in the Council than what is currently foreseen by the Charter.

Many colleagues — Algeria, Uruguay, Mexico, Senegal, as we heard a few minutes ago, and many others — have in fact referred to such a scenario of

rotating elected members in regional seats. We are convinced that such a scenario, which would safeguard the fundamental principles of the kind of democracy in which we believe, would be able to command a broad consensus across the membership. If the High-level Panel recommends a proposal for reform of that kind in any of its many possible variations, the proposal will no doubt receive the strongest support across the board. Let us work for it. Let us have vision and not just focus on our narrow national interests.

Mr. Diarra (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The document submitted by Mr. Julian Hunte and his two Vice-Chairmen faithfully reflects the current state of affairs on the question. We have also taken note of the report to the fifty-eighth session of 13 September 2004. We have given the Open-ended Working Group the mandate of pursuing the current efforts, taking into account the results achieved since its creation under resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993. We have also taken into account the experience acquired at the last session of the General Assembly.

The question of equitable representation on the Security Council is one of the most complex that our Organization has ever faced. But my delegation believes that the issue is a worthy one. It is clear that the process of democratizing the organs of the United Nations and making their working methods more transparent has broken down when one notes that the number of Security Council members represented at the time of its creation was 21.56 per cent of the total number of Member States of the Organization, and today represents no more than 7.85 per cent of Member States.

The Security Council is in reality increasingly becoming the centre of the Organization, to the detriment of the other principal organs, in particular the General Assembly. The Council's thematic debates address questions traditionally reserved for other organs. Likewise, its regulatory functions are growing, as demonstrated by the adoption of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1566 (2004). Moreover, the use of the veto is not in the collective interest; it conforms to the strictly national interests of the countries with the veto power.

Given all those circumstances, some of which are almost as old as the Organization itself, it is more appropriate than ever to keep the debate open on the two groups of questions indicated by the Working Group. Those questions concern, on the one hand, the expansion of the membership of the Security Council and related issues and, on the other, the Council's working methods and the transparency of its work.

With regard to the issue of the representativeness of the Council, it would be only just from a historical point of view to allow those nations that were freed from the colonial yoke following the creation of the United Nations to be represented equitably. Such redress of historical injustice should primarily benefit the African and Asian States. Furthermore, there are a number of crisis situations in our continent, which the United Nations currently has under consideration.

Africa therefore wishes to assume its share of responsibility in the effort to maintain international peace and security. Our continent is making contribution in that respect, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, through the establishment of subregional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as the more recently created Peace and Security Council, which covers the entire continent. We are also strengthening our cooperation with the United Nations system in the area of conflict prevention and management.

Mindful of that responsibility, Africa adopted a Declaration in 1997 at Harare, affirming the vital need to guarantee equitable geographic representation within the Security Council. Hence, there is a need to expand the membership to reflect the increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations. The expansion should affect the two categories of membership, with the expanded Council having 26 members. Two permanent seats should go to the African continent, and the number of non-permanent seats for Africa on the expanded Council should increase to five — as opposed to the current three. The African States would themselves designate the permanent African members, and their decision could then be endorsed by the General Assembly.

My delegation also believes that certain industrialized countries whose contribution to the Organization in terms of both financial resources and

peacekeeping should benefit from permanent seats in the expanded council.

Furthermore, certain developing countries should also be given favourable consideration by virtue of the size of their population and their contribution to the United Nations, as well as their role in international trade, with its new geographical realities.

The new permanent members will have the same prerogatives and the same powers as the current members. Africa supports the gradual limiting of the use of the veto until its total elimination can be achieved.

My delegation believes, however, that no decision should be taken before general agreement is reached on that group of questions or on those relating to the second group of questions concerning the working methods of the Council. The effort to restructure the Security Council needs to be sustained and pursued, but it should not be subjected to timetable constraints.

On the question of the transparency of the working methods of the Council, the report notes recent improvements, such as those listed in paragraph 60. In my delegation's view, these efforts aimed at improvement must be continued along the lines provided for in Assembly resolutions 51/193 of 17 December 1996 and 58/126 of 19 December 2003.

As to new threats, my delegation is looking forward to the conclusions of the report of the panel set up by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, on the question of the use of the veto, my delegation believes that with regard to vital questions relating to a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression, the General Assembly, according to resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, could make recommendations to Member States in the common interest with regard to those actions to be undertaken.

Mr. Sar (Cambodia): It is my honour, on behalf of the delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. Thanks in good measure to your leadership, I am fully confident that your experience and skills will bring the work of this session to a successful conclusion, thus helping us to achieve our common goal of creating a better world for all to live in.

As everyone is aware, conflicts in the world are on the increase. They extend throughout continents and are growing in complexity. The responsibility of the Council and the demands on its competence have therefore been constantly expanding. Given the need for the Council to be able to function effectively and efficiently under such fluid circumstances, it is inconceivable that its work could be carried out successfully without changing the current composition of the membership and increasing the number of seats — for both permanent and non-permanent members alike.

In this context, reform of the Security Council is essential in order to enhance the legitimacy not only of the Council in particular, but of the Organization in general. As many earlier speakers have said — and the Royal Government of Cambodia would like to reiterate this — in order for the Council to maintain its relevance and credibility, it certainly needs to evolve to complement ever-changing global realities. The Security Council does not exist separately from the rest of the world, but is a part of it. Our collective efforts should be focused to ensure that that subsidiary organ is representative of the membership, not only in terms of physical numbers, but also in providing equal ground for all Member States to voice their concerns and aspirations concerning matters related to world peace and security.

The more balanced and comprehensive representation of all continents would lead to a better sense of ownership of the Security Council on the part of all States. This means that the permanent members of the Council must represent all of the major regions. This could be achieved by increasing the number of members of the Council, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

My delegation is of the view that the most important criterion for States seeking permanent membership in the Council is the capacity to make a meaningful and sustainable contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the realization of the purposes of the Organization. Such States should be provided with the opportunity to become more involved in the work of the Security Council. In this context, we particularly support the candidacy of Japan, together with that of India and Germany, for permanent membership in the Council.

Countries such as Japan, India and Germany continue to play an active role in the United Nations. For example, Japan, with a rate of assessment close to 20 per cent, bears a significant part of the United Nations budget, including the peacekeeping budget and the budgets of the two international criminal tribunals. India has one of the largest populations in the world and has the ability and the capacity to discharge the critical task of participating in the structuring of a just and dynamic world order. On many occasions the input of such countries could be essential. Yet they are often overlooked by the major players in the Council, illustrating the fact that the Security Council remains a playing field for only a select few. From time to time, there has been a great deal of talk and discussion on the need to enlarge the membership of the Security Council and to strengthen that body to be more democratic and more efficient and to play a more important role in international politics.

It is now, therefore, the right time to propose an initiative to set up a mechanism of consultation among Member States to devise modalities, criteria and guidelines with regard to the membership of the Security Council, including its size, in the form of an appropriate rule applicable and acceptable to all Member States vis-à-vis the question of geographical representation. To that end, the interested Member States will have equal status to be represented as they wish.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): At the outset, let me congratulate the past Chairman and the members of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council for their excellent and innovative work during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to thank all the members of the United Nations Secretariat who have helped in putting together the various reports.

Today, we have before us the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/59/2). Indeed it is an informative report. It allows us to look at the work of the Council and concentrate on the points where we feel improvements and adjustments are needed.

In the last few years, we were all pleased to see improvements in the working methods of the Council — its readiness to be more open, to cooperate more closely, both with the other organs of the United Nations system and with regional partners, and to improve the process of consultations with the wider United Nations membership.

That has translated, among other things, into more open meetings and briefings, allowing for important exchanges of information between the Council members and the wider United Nations membership and promptly conveying their respective views to each other, as well as more substantial interaction with the various regional organizations.

We favour and hope for the continuation of the efforts towards more transparency, accessibility and the involvement of all non-Council members in the daily work of the Council. That is of crucial importance if the Security Council aspires to reflect the views, tendencies, hopes and goals of the world community.

Last year the Secretary-General announced the creation of a High-level Panel of eminent persons to assess new threats and challenges facing our world today and to suggest ways to effectively deal with them, including through reform of the multilateral international system. We fully support those efforts and look forward to the forthcoming relevant report.

Reform of the Security Council remains a key issue. The Council is becoming more active, with an expanding role and decisions of far-reaching consequences. The restructuring of its membership and the increase in its effectiveness thus become a vital part of the process of revitalizing the United Nations system, which aims at strengthening the Organization's ability to meet the challenges lying ahead.

Expansion of the membership of the Security Council is an issue extensively discussed and widely supported, although no consensus has so far emerged on how and when that will be done. Greece believes that the Council will be strengthened by an increase in both its permanent and non-permanent membership. That will reflect the new international environment and truly represent the views and aspirations of the present day international community in charting the Council's actions and strategic directions. The expansion will add to the Council's legitimacy and ultimately to its accountability.

An enlarged Security Council, in both its permanent and non-permanent membership, should guarantee equitable geographical representation and an

enhanced voice for the developing world. There can be no security without development, and vice versa. This will enable the Council to discharge its responsibilities more effectively. At the same time, the Council will be able to respond to the threats and challenges of the modern world in a more comprehensive manner.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I will try to be brief in my statement and go straight to the point. Croatia welcomes the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly as an informative and comprehensive document. Through its actions, the Council is further strengthening its relevance, not only in the field of international peace and security, but in the legislative area as well. The latter is becoming a matter of increased interest that goes beyond the Council's membership and should be comprehensively debated. Against this background, the initiative of Austria to convene a panel on the issue of the Security Council as world legislator is particularly welcome.

The Council's enhanced role requires more transparent relations between the Council and the General Assembly and calls for a wide-ranging debate among the United Nations membership about the reform of the Council and its strategic position in the years to come.

When it comes to the reform of the Security Council, I have the honour to present the Assembly with three main points concerning the position of Croatia.

Croatia is of the opinion that without comprehensive reform the United Nations will not be able to successfully meet all the challenges presented to us by the new century. Security Council reform is an indispensable step in that direction. Croatia fully supports enlargement of the Security Council in both categories. A formula for enlarging the Council to 24 seats seems to be the most appropriate one, considering the size of the United Nations membership and the need for an efficient Council. Croatia strongly advocates an additional seat in the enlarged Council for the countries belonging to the Eastern European Group.

Mindful of the different positions among the Member States in regard to the scope and substance of Security Council reform, Croatia stands ready to embrace a pragmatic approach to the matter. We remain open to other proposals concerning the Council's enlargement, provided they enjoy support among Member States and respect the interests of the Eastern European Group.

Croatia consistently supports improvement in the work of the Security Council with a view to enhancing its transparency and securing adequate regional representation. We are fully aware of the legitimate interests of the largest countries among us. At the same time, we have to emphasize the need to take into account the positions of smaller countries as well, especially those which have never had the privilege of serving on the Council. In the future allocation of the Council's non-permanent seats, they should be given the priority.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): It has become an annual ritual. The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been on the General Assembly's agenda at least since the Assembly established, through resolution 48/26, an Open-ended Working Group to address the issue. The Group has been working with no breakthroughs except on matters that are not at the core of the reforms. These include progress towards improving the methods of work of the Security Council, for which I thank the Working Group. The only achievement so far has been that the General Assembly has remained seized of the matter. Now is the time to act, and it is the hope of delegation of Uganda that the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly will be different and will present firm recommendations on the size and membership of the Council, both in terms of permanent and non-permanent members, in order to reflect the geopolitical and other realities of the world today.

The arguments for equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, including on criteria for membership, such as equitable geographical representation, are well known, have been adequately elaborated over many years and, therefore, need not be repeated here. What is needed now is the political will to effect the necessary changes, especially on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council.

The victors of the Second World War created a privileged club of their own composed of five permanent members, each wielding a veto. To create another class of privileged members, this time based on those who wield economic ... ght, is not an entirely comfortable concept, but sometimes in the world of political realties, logic does not carry the day. We

therefore have to be practical and pragmatic. The ideal would have been equal entitlement of all Member States to Security Council seats, permanent or non-permanent, in order for the Security Council to have enhanced legitimacy and credibility.

That said, my delegation would go along with the suggestion to create a category of permanent members without a veto and to increase the number of non-permanent members. For the former category, Africa should be entitled to at least two seats, and other developing countries should also be represented. The criteria for this should be worked out either by region or globally. We would prefer regional representation.

With regard to the veto — and, once again, for pragmatic reasons — the status quo should be maintained. We can begin next year with the expansion of the non-permanent membership and the creation of a new category of permanent members without a veto. In the meantime, we should think of developing guidelines on how the veto can be wisely exercised in the interests of world peace and security. The final stage in the reform process would be a consideration of the abolishment of the veto at the appropriate time.

Let me briefly touch on other matters. Very often in the Security Council, reports critical of Member States have been discussed and resolutions adopted without affording the States concerned an opportunity to be heard, in the case of States that are not members of the Security Council. The right to be heard is a cardinal rule of natural justice. It is, therefore, only fair to afford such a Member the opportunity to be heard before a resolution is adopted. The present rule that allows a Member to participate silently in the deliberations of Security Council without the right to speak should be done away with. Once a Member is granted the right to participate, its representative should automatically be allowed to speak.

The Security Council has progressively invited more non-members to participate in debates on thematic topics. That is a welcome move. These debates enrich the outcome of the Security Council's deliberations. Their scope and frequency should be increased. The list of speakers should be arranged alphabetically by country name rather than, as is the present practice, Council members all speaking first. In that way, the debates would be interactive. There should also be more open meetings of the Security Council. In other words, the Council should present a more human face and should not be an unapproachable, mysterious and intimidating institution.

Lastly, there should be more dialogue among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General. For instance, monthly consultations between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly should be institutionalized. There is nothing in the Charter, for instance, to prevent joint meetings of the Security Council and General Assembly to discuss a particular topic.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): The delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in addressing this agenda item, would first of all, Mr. President, wish to pay a special tribute to the efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly, who, by assuming the chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, sought to give increased political emphasis and direction to its work.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group contained in document A/58/47 reflects in a very substantive way the extent of the exchanges of views among delegations on the following six points that were systematically addressed: size of an enlarged Security Council; question of regional representation; criteria for membership; relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council; accountability; and the use of the veto. Those exchanges of views revealed, however, the complex nature of the subject matter under discussion and the wide divergence of opinion that continues to exist among United Nations Member States on almost every aspect of these topics.

The views expressed by Member States on these points are clearly set out in the report. The task of the international community at this stage is to ensure further progress towards concluding the discussions on these key issues, taking into account all the competing and contending ideas, in order to implement the decision of our heads of State or Government reflected in the Millennium Declaration, in which they resolved, inter alia, to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

As we go forward with the implementation of this mandate, we will also have to bear in mind that the

Secretary-General, in his September 2003 statement to the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, drew attention to the urgent need for the Security Council to regain the confidence of States and of world public opinion by demonstrating its ability to deal effectively with the most difficult issues and by becoming more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as of the geopolitical realities of today. To that end, as we all are aware, he established his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which is also likely to address the question of Security Council reform.

We therefore need to manage these two processes in a manner that will allow the United Nations, as its moves towards the observance of the sixtieth anniversary of its founding, to benefit not only from the collective wisdom of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel but also from the well-thought-out positions of Member States on all aspects of this issue that have been advanced over the past 10 years.

What the international community must, therefore, seek to achieve in any reform of the Security Council, in the opinion of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, is the multilateralization of the international security policies of States and the avoidance of the marginalization of the Security Council in matters relating to threats to international peace and security.

In undertaking this comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the international community would need to address, basically, the composition of the Council, its decision-making process and its working methods. While some progress has been made with respect to the latter, the other two areas still present difficult choices.

Any Security Council reform must, therefore, result in a change in the Council's composition not only so as to reflect more adequately the current geopolitical realities at the global level, but also in order that it may become more representative of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations. Such a change in its composition would, in our opinion, strengthen the Security Council's own legitimacy and effectiveness, while not affecting in any way its efficiency.

On the related issue of decision-making in the Security Council, it would be recalled that the last vestiges of the unanimity rule, which had been the general rule for decision-making in the League of Nations, are today to be found in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which requires the affirmative votes of nine members, including those of the five permanent members, for a decision of the Council on matters other than those of a procedural nature.

The report of the Open-ended Working Group lists in annex III the draft resolutions of the Council that were not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council during the period 16 February 1946 to 21 April 2004. What is clear from the listing provided by the Secretariat is that all five permanent members have, at one time or another, exercised the right of veto, some more often than others and at particular times during that period. Any reform of the veto power will require, in the first instance, an honest analysis by the five permanent members of the use to which the veto power has been put and whether such use has contributed to or endangered further the maintenance of international peace and security. Without agreement among the permanent members on the judicious use of the veto, there is little prospect for any meaningful change on this aspect of the reform of decision-making in the Security Council.

Substantial and meaningful reform of the Security Council would require an amendment to the Charter and must, therefore, be the result of a broad consensus not only among the membership of the United Nations as a whole but also, and more particularly, among the permanent members of the Security Council. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago would therefore urge the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group to continue to build upon the progress already made. In that regard, we should strive at the fifty-ninth session to make specific proposals that can be the subject of further intense informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.